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The CHARTER-HOUSE Foundation
considered:

IN A 693. d 3
SERMON

Preached in the

CHARTER-HOUSE
CHAPPEL;

On Monday Dec. 13. 1725.

BEING THE
Commemoration for the FOUNDER.

By PHILIP BEARCROFT, M. A. K

Preacher at the Charter-House, Fellow of Merton
College in Oxford, and Chaplain to the Right
Honourable John Lord Viscount Percival.

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MDCCXXVI.

THE CHARTER-HOUSE

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

CHARTER-HOUSE

CHAP. I.

BY THE REV. DR. HENRY M. A.

OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

ON SUNDAY

THE 10th OF SEPTEMBER 1781



To the RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
GOVERNOURS
OF THE
CHARTER-HOUSE,

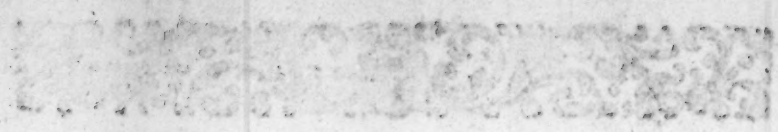
This SERMON is
most humbly Dedicated

by their Lordships

Most Dutiful, and

most Obedient Servant,

Philip Bearcroft.



To the Right Honourable

THE

GOVERNORS

OF THE

CHARTER HOUSE

This SERMON is

most humbly Dedicated

by their Lordships

Wm. Dugdale, and

most Obedient Servants

Philip Bearcroft.



PSALM XXXIII. ver. I.

*Rejoice in the Lord, O Ye Righteous;
for it becometh well the Just to be
thankful.*



O return thanks for Benefits received is a duty universally acknowledged both reasonable, and just. The great Rule of Equity prescribeth it to us; we expect thanks for Obligations conferred, and therefore ought to return them for Obligations received. If then this conclusion be just, and it becometh sometimes a duty to be thankful to Man; how much more strongly doth the argument hold; how great is the duty of being thankful to God? If we are bound in Gratitude to give thanks for the accidental little offices of kindness, and humanity we receive from Man; how much more are we bound in Gratitude to give thanks for the perpetual and inestimable

B

great

great Benefits we receive from God? It is impossible to be either Righteous, or Just without it; for as a moral obligation is the righteous Man bound to observe, and as a just debt is the just Man bound to pay the duty of Thanksgiving to God. This the Royal Psalmist, the righteous, and just Author of the text, was very sensible of; and therefore in the beginning of this his Psalm, or Song to God, He calleth upon his righteous, and just brethren to join in Chorus with him to the Praises of God. *Rejoice in the Lord, O Ye Righteous; for it becometh well the just to be thankful;* or, as the words would be with no very material difference strictly translated; *Rejoice, or sing praises, O Ye Just, to the Lord: in the Righteous comely is praise.* And in the next Psalm he professeth his continuance in this duty; *I will always give thanks unto the Lord, his Praise shall ever be in my mouth;* but still more expressly in the hundred, and forty fifth Psalm, most properly entitled, *David's Psalm of Praise,* as well from the pe-

^a Psalm xxxiv. 1.

culiarly Divine strains, and emphatick harmony, as from the subject matter of it. ^b *I will magnify thee, O God, My King, and I will praise thy name for ever, and ever.* ^c *Every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy name for ever, and ever.* And it is most probable, that it was this very tender sense holy *David* had of the Divine Favours, with his most thankful acknowledgments for them, arising from the inmost recesses of his Soul, that recommended him so particularly to God, as to obtain to him that most distinguishingly glorious character of the ^d *Man after God's own Heart*. For if we examine his conduct in other respects, we shall be at a loss to discover, what else could recommend him to so great a Favour. *Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses*, and most of the other Patriarchs, seem by the Holy Scriptures to have walked with God as blameless, and in some very grievous instances more blameless than *David* did: but in giving of thanks, and singing praises unto God did this *sweet Singer of Israel* by much

^b Ver. 1.^c Ver. 2.^d 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

excel them all. He praises the Lord in the hundred, and third Psalm with such a Divine ardour of Soul for all his benefits, and both in that, and in many^c others chanteth his Hallelujahs to the whole Creation with such extatick raptures, as could not but reach the heart, and secure him the affection of the great God of Love; to whom the sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving is the most noble offering we can bring: and is accepted by him with pleasure from his Creatures, as the grateful tribute of their Creation.

Therefore our excellent Liturgy taketh care to remind us, as often as we come together into the House of God, that we here *assemble, and meet together to render thanks to God, for the great Benefits, that we have received at his hands, and to set forth his most worthy Praise.* This is to be always the chief end of our meeting here; but in order to do this aright, it is highly proper in the first place, to confess our sins to God, and ask his pardon for them, that our Souls may be delivered from sin by a pardon given us upon

^c cxlv, cxlviii, cl.

our true Repentance, and so our lips pure when we sing unto God: and this pardon being pronounced, we immediately proceed to the Praises of God, the great end of our Creation; and this we are to do every day, nay, every minute, and hour of our lives, if not by an actual performance, yet by an habitual disposition, and inclination thereto; which must break forth into act ^{ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ}, in every season, and upon every occasion proper for it. Seven times a day did Holy *David* in the great zeal of his Devotion sing, and praise his God, *seven times a day do I praise thee; because of thy judgments.* But morning, and evening *He* never failed; and this *He* recommendeth to us for our constant practice; ^{It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most Highest, to tell of thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of thy truth in the night season;} which our Church taketh care, we shall do in our publick, and prescribeth likewise in our private Prayers. This in the language

^f Ephes. vi. 18. ^g Psalm cxix. 164. ^h Psalm xcii. 1, 2.

of the Scripture is to do a thing continually, to do it constantly, in its due, and regular season; and therefore thus continually to praise God, for the continual Benefits he conferreth upon us, is our ordinary duty.

But there is beside this an extraordinary duty of Praise, and Thanksgiving to God, for the extraordinary favours He conferreth upon us; such are all those, which exceed the ordinary dispensations of the good Providence of God. And this extraordinary duty of Praise, and Thanksgiving increaseth in proportion to the greatness of the extraordinary favours received. Great therefore, very great, upon this *Solemn Occasion* is our extraordinary duty of Praise, and Thanksgiving to God. We are here met together *to render thanks to God for all the great Benefits, that we have received at his hands, and to set forth his most worthy praise* for them; but for this more especially, and in particular are we now met together, to thank God for the *generous Maintenance* he hath reached out unto us, and the *ingenious Education* he hath vouchsafed

safed us by the *bounteous Liberality* of our memorable Founder Mr. THOMAS SUTTON; that at this season of the year first commenced, and therefore this season of the year by our *Great, and Good Governors* is piously established in its annual revolutions the season of Thanksgiving to God. Which that we may better observe, and perform at this time, it will be very proper to take an estimate of the great Benefit received. The great benefit received is this, *A Most Noble Foundation of Christian Charity;*

- 1st, *For the relief of the Poor;*
- 2^{dly}, *For the advancement of Learning, and*
- 3^{dly}, *For the Propagation of Religion.*

This * a very great Man of that time telleth us was our pious Founder's intent; and therefore under these three heads do I choose to consider the Benefit received, and from thence to make an estimate of the greatness of it.

1st, *This Foundation was designed for the relief of the Poor.*

* Lord Verulam.

ⁱ *To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, saith the great Apostle to the Hebrews; ^k He that giveth alms, sacrificeth praise, saith the wisdom of Sirach; ^l it is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God, saith again the same great Apostle; as being the most substantial proof, and undeniable evidence of a grateful mind. For it is very possible to be grateful only in shew, and thankful barely in appearance, and with the Jews of old hypocritically to ^m honour God with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, very much estranged from a due sense of the great duty of Praise. But when we honour God with our substance, it is beyond appearance, we are grateful in reality, and beyond contradiction prove, we have a tender sense of the Divine Favours deeply impressed upon our Souls. For if we ask with the Royal Psalmist ⁿ what we shall render unto the Lord for all his Benefits, we*

ⁱ Heb. xiii. 16.^k Eccclus xxxv. 2.^l Phil. iv. 18.^m Isaiah xxix. 13.ⁿ Psalm cxvi. 12.

shall immediately find, that our Goodness, *i. e.* our Beneficence, or power of doing good extendeth not to him, who is compleatly happy, and enjoyeth all things in himself, and that therefore we cannot make any direct, and immediate returns of kindness, and favour to God, but that indirect, and mediate ones we may, in the persons of his Poor, whom he has commissioned to receive them of us in his stead.

To do good therefore, and to distribute, and to give alms for the sake of God is the most acceptable sacrifice of Praise, it is a sure mark of a willing, grateful, and obedient mind, and then *it is accepted according to what a Man hath*, and becometh both the height of Gratitude and the excellency of Virtue too. It is the height of Gratitude, because it is the best return we can make; and the excellence of Virtue, because it is to imitate God in his Goodness, the most glorious, amiable, and excellent of all his Perfections.

This among many others is one good reason for God's unequal distribution

tion of worldly favours, and why the
"Poor shall never cease from the land,
 viz. that there may never be wanting an
 opportunity of exercising this great vir-
 tue of Humanity, or rather of the Di-
 vinity; that we may always have it in
 our power to do good, and as often as
 we please, give the most solid proofs of
 our Gratitude to God. To these ends
 according to our Blessed Saviour, the
"Poor we have always with us; they
 are always at hand to exercise our Vir-
 tue, to manifest our Gratitude, and to
 prove our Obedience. For lest by this
 unequal distribution of his favours, God
 might not seem to have a due care of
 all the works of his hands, and more
 especially of Man, if I may be allow'd
 the expression, the Favourite of the Crea-
 tion, hath God expressly commanded
 them, that are rich in this world, that
they be ready to give, and glad to di-
stribute what they can spare to their
poor brethren that have need; and spare
 they most certainly can; for God hath
 dealt out his Benefits with a most libe-

* Deut. xv. 11.

° Mark xiv. 7.

° 1 Tim. vi. 17.

ral hand, and there is abundantly enough for the comfortable subsistence of every one, would each man be contented with what is properly his share; but if we are desirous of more, and grasp at what was not originally our due, we are not allowed to engross it to our selves, to pamper therewith our wanton lusts, and appetites, but must commence the Stewards of the Great Sovereign of Nature, and as such take care of his servants; after his example, and in humble obedience to his Commands, as far as it is in our power, *give to all their meat in due season.* This is the proper use of Riches, and the Blessings consequent thereupon, are the great advantages which attend them.

A most just and good Steward, therefore, of the Great Sovereign of Nature was our *most Charitable Founder*, by whose pious distribution of his wealth great numbers here in due season are daily fed, and not only fed, but taught; taught daily to return their most humble thanks to the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, the chief Proprietor of these daily benefits con-

ferred upon *this Steward of God*, but
our most generous Benefactor.

1. Most generous in the extent of his kindness, and
2. Most gracious in the manner of it.

1. Most generous in the extent of his kindness, if to maintain above two hundred persons, all decently and properly according to their several stations and degrees be true Generosity. But why do I call it Generosity? That is too mean a name; it is Charity, truly Christian Charity, to provide for such a number of Souls.

2. Most gracious therefore was our good Founder in the manner of this his great gift, by which it is very manifest, that He chiefly considered *our better part*, our immortal Souls, tho' our bodies were by no means neglected by him, but a very ample provision made for both. And this will more evidently appear, if we consider

1. The persons for whom, and
2. The end to which *this Great Benefaction* was designed. 1. The

1. The persons for whom *this great Benefaction* was designed are both Young and Old; and

2. The end of it, that they may here be maintained, and taught, the Young how to live, and the Old how to die good Christians.

Therefore the Scholars are incapable of admission in the first stage of their lives, while the faculties of the Soul are most weak, and reason but yet in the dawn; but in the second stage, when the faculties of the Soul gather strength, and reason begineth to exert itself; They are here kindly received, warmed, and cherished, as in the ripening Sun; and learn the rudiments of Literature both human and Divine; they are taught to discover the great Author of their Being, and the duties they owe unto Him; and are instructed in the learned Languages, the great keys of Science, that they may be able hereafter to open, and search the most reclude parts of it, and themselves one day explain, and teach them to the world.

But

But the Pensioners are not admitted, until declined in years, because hitherto it is to be hoped they have been of service to the world, and beneficial to others, as well as themselves, but being now declined in years, old age lying heavy upon them, and the infirmities of Nature gathering strength against them; it is to be feared in their bad circumstances they could be of little, or no service in the world; and therefore they have a *decent retreat*, and *comfortable maintenance* provided for them here, that from henceforth being dead to this boisterous, troublesome world, they may live to themselves alone, and lead the residue of their lives in Righteousness, and Peace; most carefully recollecting their past transgressions, and as earnestly repenting of them, stedfastly resolving to continue for the future in the true faith, and fear of God; and thus with holy *Job*, *patiently to wait all the days of their appointed time, till their great change shall come*, that they may then willingly, and even with joy quit this

* Job xiv. 14.

life, in an assured hope of a glorious Resurrection to life everlasting through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I shall now proceed to the second head of my discourse, and *shall consider this Foundation, as designed for the Advancement of Learning.*

In the first age of Christianity, whilst its Religion was pure, and unmix'd, it wanted not the assistance of humane Learning, either for its propagation, or support; being backed by Miracles, tho' preached by Fishermen simple, and unlearned, it was abundantly sufficient for its own Establishment in its true native Simplicity, and genuine form. And therefore St. *Paul* is very careful to inform us, ¹*that his speech and his preaching were not with inticing words of Man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.* For St. *Paul*, and as far as it appears, St. *Paul* alone of all the Apostles knew how by art to persuade, *being educated in the School of *Hillel*, most eminent for Learning among the *Jews*, and there brought up

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 4.

* Prideaux Con. p. 2. b. 8.

at the feet, *i. e.* being the Disciple, and constant attendant of the great *Γαμαλιελ*, a Doctor of the Law, and had in reputation among all the People, and Prince of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews: From the precepts of so great a master *St. Paul* was well skilled in humane Literature, as is evident from his discourse to the *Athenians*, Acts xvii; and knew how by art to persuade, as most fully appears from his eloquent Speech to King *Agrippa* before *Portius Festus*, the Roman Governor of *Judea*, Acts xxvi. But his speech and his preaching in general of the doctrine of Christ was not in the enticing words of Man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power. In plain and simple terms He delivered his message to the world, and proved it to come from God, not by Rhetorical Eloquence, and probable arguments, but by the demonstration of Miracles, the fullest evidence of a message from God; and therefore *St. Paul* purposely avoided the Sophistical Eloquence of humane art, not only as judging it

beneath the dignity of a message from God, for its reception to be beholden to the assistance of Man, but also, and chiefly to settle Christianity on its true foundation, the express will of God, *that our Faith, as St. Paul informs us, should stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the Power of God.* Like a wise Master-builder, He would not place Christianity on the sandy foundation of human reasoning, but placed it on the immovable rock of the great Power of God.

Being firmly settled on this true foundation, it did bear unshaken the most violent storms of Persecution raised against it by its cruel Adversary the Devil, who vainly attempted to smother it in its infancy, in the blood of its true Professors; but the good Providence of God overruled the Devil's malice, and confirmed Christianity by those very storms. *The blood of the Martyrs was the seed of the Church,* and produced a most plentiful harvest of Converts to it.

1 Cor. ii. 5.

Its subtle Enemy therefore next attacketh it by the gentler arts of Peace, Philosophy and Rhetorick are the arms, by which it is next stormed. Then was there first occasion for, and therefore then first was introduced humane Learning into the Christian Church to defend, but not to propagate Christianity, for the reasons already alledged. And defended it was most learnedly, the Devil again defeated, and the Philosophers foiled at their own weapons by the learned Fathers of it.

Being thus twice defeated, and experimentally convinced, that the *gates of Hell, would never finally prevail against* the Church of Christ by these methods of attack, its restless Adversary resolves next to try whether Ignorance would not finally prevail; but Thanks be to God, the great Father of Mercies! herein he did not, and we have God's gracious promise, he never shall finally prevail; but for several hundred years the Devil craftily seemed at peace with the Church, and lulled it asleep into ignorance by ease, while he most plentifully

tifully sowed his tares; so as in a manner quite to choak up, and obscure the little wheat, that was left among them. The tares of Superstition, the first born of Ignorance sprung up so abundantly in this deep sleep of the Christian Church, and flourished so mightily under the pretended infallible authority of a fallible man, that *the word of God was made of none effect by his traditions*; nay, vain and idolatrous was the worship paid to God by the commandment of man; untill God in his great Mercy awaked us out of this Lethargick Sleep, and taught us by the revival of Learning, and Knowledge among us to discover, and upon the discovery gave us grace to reject these corrupt traditions, and led us back to the fountain-head the holy Scriptures, there to search for, and learn the expresse will of God; that we might distinguish the commandments of God from the commandments of man, and learn to obey them accordingly; the commandments of God in the first place, and afterwards those of man, whilst duly sub-

servient to, and only tending to promote the observance of the commandments of God; for which good end, and for which good end alone, Man hath authority to command in the Church of God.

And being by the Grace of God brought back from Ignorance and Error, it was natural, and grateful highly to esteem, and value the means by which we were thus happily reduced, *viz.* Learning, and Knowledge; and it was but prudent, to take all proper measures for securing for the future these invaluable Blessings among us; and to this end Schools of Literature, and Endowments for Learning have been amply scattered through the Land; but none, I would gratefully believe, more prudently designed, or more happily successful in promoting this great end, than *the School*, and other Endowments of *this great Foundation*; which are not confined within these walls, but reach both Universities, where a generous Pension is given by it to its learned Sons; nor doth its Care of them, or its Bounty terminate
here,

here, but it kindly receiveth them again, as opportunity offereth to its most distinguished Favours at home, or to its Preferments abroad, where it sendeth them to preach the Gospel to its Tenants, its more distant Relations, with a liberal, and ample Maintenance in many different parts of this Realm. Thus, like the Sun, doth *this Most Noble Foundation* shine upon all, but warmeth those most, directly subject to its rays; and is a *Most Illustrious Example of Protestant Charity, to the Glory of God, and the Honour of the Reformation in general, and of this Church and Nation in particular, as the Great Charitable Donation of a private Member of it.*

And by this method, *this Foundation* likewise answers that other part of *our pious Founder's* design, viz. *The Propagation of Religion*; which I had set apart for the third head of my discourse; but it is so much intermixed, and so naturally coincideth with what I have said on the second, the *Advancement of Learning*, that I shall not detain

tain you upon it, when I have further observed, that it is not thus alone, that *this Foundation* advanceth Learning, and propagateth Religion. No, this *most noble Foundation*, even great as it is, is too fruitful a Mother to be able again to receive, and employ all her numerous Issue, and too happy, and successful are very many of her Sons to stand in need of her own employments; the good Providence of God most amply providing for them, and advancing them to the Honours, and Preferments of the world by other means, and thereby enabling them to answer the great end of their Education here, by putting it in their power to be beneficial to Mankind, and both to *advance Learning*, and to *propagate Religion*, and to *exercise towards others that Charity*, the happy influences of which here first they felt, the rudiments of which here first they were taught.

And now, from what hath been said, may, I hope, be taken a proper Estimate of the *Greatness*, and not only of the

the Greatness, but *Goodness*, nay, *Wisdom* and *Excellency* of our pious *Founder's Design*, who had so much of his good Maker's image in him, as to delight to do good, and to be as beneficial as he possibly could; for Beneficence is a Godlike virtue, and, as I have already observed, the imitation of God in the very best of his Perfections.

This proves the *Goodness*; as the great number to which it reacheth demonstrateth the *Greatness* of this most extensive *Liberality*. And if generously to maintain both *Old*, and *Young*, and at the same time, and by the same means to advance *Learning*, and to propagate *Religion*, be a wise and excellent design, the *Wisdom* and *Excellency* of this *Foundation* is likewise evident; which, Blessed be God, hath hitherto been successful, and fully answered its *Author's* great and good design.

That this *Foundation* hath relieved the *Poor*, and that great numbers of them, hundreds, and hundreds now with God have happily experienced.

That

That *it hath advanced Learning, and propagated Religion*, the many successful Labours, and pious Works of its learned Sons declare; who being dead yet speak, their *Works praise them*, and this *Foundation*.

That *it continueth to relieve the Poor*, we have a most full proof now before us. And that it yet *advanceth Learning, and propagateth Religion*, and that in a very eminent degree, the great merit of our learned Friends very loudly proclaimeth, who most gratefully present themselves at *this Solemnity* to make their due acknowledgment to the great Father of mercies, and Author of every good we enjoy, for the great good they here once received, for the seeds of Religion, and Learning here first sown in their hearts, which now yield much fruit in its due, and proper season, and bless with their increase both *Church, and State*.

And that this most fruitful Foundation will continue thus to do good, and bring forth much fruit to the latest period

riod of time to the service of both *Church, and State*, we have the same security, that we have for the *Present Happy Establishment* of them; for it is *our peculiar Honour*, of all the many Great, and Noble Foundations for Charity, and Learning within this Realm, to have our *Great King* for our *Honorary Governor*, together with his *Royal Highness the Prince of Wales*, and the *first and chief Persons* both in *Church, and State* to govern us under *His sacred Majesty's most happy Auspices*. The *Great Blessing* of this we have *experimentally* felt; and the *Happiness* of it may we for ever enjoy! for thus governed, and thus protected, humanly speaking, we must be *secure, and flourish in full Prosperity*; the power of Man can do nothing against us, and the power of Heaven, it is to be hoped, is on our side: We have received most signal instances of the *Divine Favour*, and have continual marks of it; and may we be duly thankful for these great Mercies!

To return therefore from whence we set out, it is *very meet, right, and our bounden duty to rejoyce in the Lord* for these great Benefits; and *it becometh us well to be thankful* for such extraordinary Favours.

1. To God in the first place, from whom every good, and perfect gift doth originally proceed, by giving thanks, and by joining with the Royal Psalmist, our *pious Founder*, and all the Spirits of just men made perfect, nay, with Angels, and Arch-Angels and all the Host of Heaven in Hallelujahs to his name; and

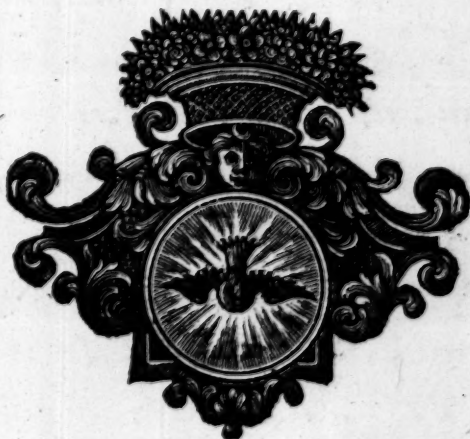
2. To *our Founder*; by expressing upon every occasion an honourable regard to his most worthy memory, but more especially upon *this his great Commemoration Day*, and by daily blessing God for Him; and

3. To *our Governours*; by paying a most respectful Obedience to all their Commands; and by praying unto God for them, that they may long continue in Peace and Prosperity, to govern us on earth,

earth, and that, when they shall be taken from their earthly Glories, they may be admitted to the everlasting Glories of the Kingdom of Heaven. thro' Jesus Christ our Lord;

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be finally ascribed all Honour, and Glory, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion for evermore.

F I N I S.



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